

### **Reflections on October 2010 Internship Field-based Activities**

As a practicing Director of Technology in La Vernia ISD, my Internship activities are naturally somewhat different from those of the typical student. After discussing the best course of action with Dr. Abernathy, we agreed that under the guidance of my Mentor, LVISD Superintendent Dr. Tom Harvey, I would pick tasks that I perform as a part of my duties, but examine them with a critical eye towards which ISTE Technology Facilitator (TF) Standards and Performance Indicator they address. Additionally, two separate, special technology tasks are designated as Internship Projects.

October was a milestone month as I began the implementation phase of both my Internship projects; all planning and design work and ordering having been completed in September, servers, thin clients and software began arriving for my Special Education Virtualization and Virtual Desktop Project. Installations are going on as I write this, and I am anxious to see this project come to fruition.

Also this month, after the completion of my preliminary work and committee formation, I hosted the first meeting of the new La Vernia ISD Instructional Software Committee (ISC), my secondary Internship Project. Every performance indicator under ISTE Standard TF-III, Teaching, Learning, and the Curriculum, in which technology facilitators apply and help implement curriculum plans that include methods and strategies for utilizing technology to maximize student learning, was addressed during this activity. Williamson and Redish (2009) highlight the importance of Standard TF-III for technology leaders; "In an era when the needs of students are rapidly changing, schools are not providing digital-age learners with the types of environments that parallel the connectivity and social interaction patterns that they are accustomed to outside of school. This disparity threatens to alienate youth further and encourage

the already growing student perceptions that schools are outdated and irrelevant to their interests and goals” (p.57). The ISC is tasked with examining *every* piece of instructional software after determining the instructional need the software is supposed to address; next, the software is evaluated to determine how well it meets the instructional need and how well it fits District technology requirements and guidelines. Finally, the committee makes a recommendation whether to keep or replace the software in question, and if it is deemed best to replace the software, the committee will research and evaluate potential replacement software for instructional and technological appropriateness. As Committee Facilitator, I am using the Delphi Method as a consensus-building tool to overcome the potential political or personal influence exerted or perceived by any committee members.

The task of forming and leading the ISC really exemplifies the educational leadership role I am undertaking thanks to my degree program. I am not only leading the committee, I am leading the research into the learning goals addressed by each piece of software. Pitler, Hubbell, Kuhn and Malenoski (2007) note that “Research indicates that technology’s use in the classroom can have an additional positive influence on student learning when the learning goals are clearly articulated...” (p. 2).

Other Field-based Activities performed in October included special presentations of my Lamar Video and Multimedia Technology Class Personal Digital Story, “Tracks to the Future, Ties to the Past” at both Leadership Team and School Board Meetings, continuing work on E-Rate, and working with campus facilitators on administration of the Texas Teacher STaR Chart. All of these tasks were essential to meeting standard on the ISTE Technology Facilitator Standards as detailed on my October Field-based Activity Report.

While reflecting on the month's activities, I gained a deeper understanding of the role of inquiry in school improvement initiatives. As Dana (2009) observes, "...an inquiry stance is synonymous with professional growth and provides a nontraditional approach to administrator development that can lead to meaningful change for schools and all the people who inhabit them – principals, teachers and students" (p. 11). This connects to my past learning as we were encouraged throughout the degree program to take an inquiry stance and use both traditional research and action research to find innovative solutions to our wonderings.

My future learning has been impacted by the ISC; I will have to learn much more about each piece of instructional software we use, and the instructional need that it is supposed to address, in order to be most effective as Facilitator.

Viewing my performance on these tasks from an educator's point of view, I learned modeling is the best way to introduce new concepts; while I had often verbally extolled the virtues of digital storytelling, showing my own Personal Digital Story communicated in minutes the message I had been unable to get across, and we now have several teachers interested in using digital storytelling in their lessons.

My performance during these tasks was impacted by my ongoing desire to improve my effectiveness as an instructional facilitator for my teachers; I put extra effort into viewing each technology-related activity I performed from the instructional perspective, and have been successful in implementing several new initiatives that will positively impact teaching and learning. Based on my performance of my Internship Field-based Activities, I will take a more confident view of myself as an educational leader to future contexts.

As a learner, I gained the knowledge I had been seeking of instructional best practices and methodologies for implementing instructional technology throughout my degree program

and during the entire Internship experience. I was effective as a learner as I transferred my learning on the role of digital storytelling into practice by showing my Personal Digital Story and reviewing all the steps involved in creating it. I will continue to transfer *all* my learning from throughout my degree program to new situations as I remain focused on leading my teachers as they effectively implement instructional technology.

As a lifelong learner, I must perform further research regarding the best professional development and learning opportunities to stay abreast of changes in educational methods and instructional technology; I will develop a three-year professional development plan that will address two separate ISTE Technology Facilitator Standards that are essential to my growth as an educational technology leader. First, under Standard TF-I, Technology Operations and Concepts, I must address Performance Indicator TF-I.B, requiring that I demonstrate continual growth in technology knowledge and skills, and stay abreast of both current and emerging technologies, in order to maintain my expertise. Second, under Standard TF-V, Productivity and Professional Practice, Performance Indicator TF-V.A calls for me to use technology resources to engage in ongoing professional development and lifelong learning, while Performance Indicator TF-V.B directs that I continually evaluate and reflect on my professional practice to facilitate making informed decisions regarding the use of technology in support of student learning. My plan will be included in my Lamar Comprehensive Exam.

#### References:

Williamson, J. & Redish, T. (2009). *Technology Facilitation and Leadership Standards: What Every K-12 Leader Should Know and Be Able To Do*. Eugene, OR: International Society for Technology in Education.

Pitler, H., Hubbell, E., Kuhn, M. & Malenoski, K. (2007). *Using Technology with Classroom Instruction that Works*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Dana, N. (2009). *Leading with Passion and Knowledge: The Principal as Action Researcher*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.